



THE AMERICAN CONGRESS
OF OBSTETRICIANS
AND GYNECOLOGISTS

Office of the President

James T. Breeden, MD, FACOG
1200 N. Mountain Street
Carson City, NV 89703

July 17, 2012

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, MD
2350 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Dr. Cassidy,

On behalf of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), representing over 57,000 physicians and partners in women's health, we are pleased to support your bill that would permit health plans to cover prenatal, labor and delivery, and postpartum care without a deductible, without jeopardizing their IRS status as high deductible plans linked to health savings accounts.

Your bill would allow high deductible health plans (HDHPs) to cover maternity care, without requiring women to first meet the yearly deductible amount. This provision will help pregnant women access care that improves health outcomes for both mother and baby. Research has shown that pregnant women who lack access to a regular provider of prenatal care, often due to lack of affordable and meaningful health insurance coverage, are more likely to have unidentified and unmonitored treatable conditions, like gestational diabetes. Inadequate use of prenatal care is also associated with increased risks of low birth-weight, preterm birth, neonatal mortality, infant mortality and maternal mortality. Preterm births alone increase US health care costs by \$26 billion annually. By encouraging HDHPs in conjunction with health savings accounts to cover maternity care without a deductible, you are helping close the gap that may prevent women from accessing timely care both during and immediately after pregnancy. We also greatly appreciate that the HHS Secretary would need to work with ACOG and the American Academy of Pediatrics to ensure that eligible services meet the latest clinical best practices.

Again, thank you for your sponsorship of this bill. We look forward to working closely with you to move this bill forward. Please don't hesitate to contact ACOG Federal Affairs Director Nevena Minor, at 202-314-2322 or nminor@acog.org if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

James T. Breeden, MD, FACOG
President